



NQ Verification 2021–22 Round 1

Qualification Verification Summary Report

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Section 1: Verification group information

Verification group name:	Geography
Verification event/visiting information:	Event
Date published:	June 2022

National Courses/Units verified:

H27G 73	National 3	Physical Environments
H27J 73	National 3	Human Environments
H27J 73	National 3	Global Issues
H27G 74	National 4	Physical Environments
H27H 74	National 4	Human Environments
H27J 74	National 4	Global Issues

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Section 2: Comments on assessment

Assessment approaches

Good practice

In relation to assessment approaches, the following examples of good practice were observed during verification:

- ◆ Most centres used SQA unit assessment support packs and current prior verified assessments.
- ◆ Some centres devised their own assessments to meet the needs of pupils and to use OS maps of the local area.
- ◆ Submissions included separate unit approaches and combined approaches.
- ◆ Submissions included interim and complete unit evidence. Interim evidence was used more in this round of verification compared with previous years. This probably reflects the effects of COVID-19 on learning and teaching.
- ◆ Assessments included written test submissions, PowerPoint presentations, leaflets and posters.
- ◆ The quality of judging evidence tables has improved with centres clearly using the judging evidence column to inform the possible candidate answers.

Areas for consideration

Centres are advised to consider the following:

- ◆ From the start of session 2016–17, centres had to assess candidates against the revised outcomes and assessment standards and judging evidence as outlined in the judging evidence tables. This includes making sure that the unit assessment support packs (UASPs) used are the current ones. Centres should ensure that any prior verified assessments are current. Prior verification is no longer valid once a unit has been revised. The assessments in the UASPs and the prior verified assessments on the SQA website are all current and valid. Centres should also check that any assessments they have had prior verified are still valid.
- ◆ When adapting UASPs and prior verified assessments, centres must ensure that the integrity of the assessment standard is maintained by ensuring the use of the correct command word (for example: describe/explain) and using sources appropriate to the level being assessed.
- ◆ When adapting UASPs for a different level, centres should ensure that the command words are appropriate to the level, for example: 'describe' at N3 may become 'explain' at N4.
- ◆ When centres devise their own assessment tasks, they must include the assessment task and the judging evidence table, including the 'possible responses' for verification.
- ◆ It would be helpful for assessors and for verification if, in the assessment tasks, the questions always included the assessment standard (for example: 1.1, 1.2) being assessed.

Assessment judgements

Good practice

In relation to assessment judgements, the following examples of good practice were observed during verification:

- ◆ Most assessment judgements were in line with national standards.
- ◆ Many centres included detailed and helpful comments about assessment judgements. This helps the external verifiers to locate and review the evidence in the candidates' work.
- ◆ Some centres indicated on candidate scripts where assessment standards were overtaken — the use of 1.1, 1.2, etc, and the use of 'd' for description and 'e' for explanation provided clarity.
- ◆ Many centres included a summary grid to indicate which assessment standards had been overtaken by each candidate. The comments made by assessors were detailed and informative which helped to make external verification more straightforward.
- ◆ It was helpful for verification when ticks were placed at points on the candidate script where an assessment standard was overtaken. This helps the external verifiers to locate the evidence in the candidates' work. Nearly all centres used this approach.

- ◆ Many centres used the candidate assessment record effectively and included detailed and helpful comments to give reasons for assessment judgements. These were also used to show internal verification and cross-marking.

Areas for consideration

Centres are advised to consider the following:

- ◆ Each assessment standard needs to be assessed once only. There was some over-assessment this year. While it is understood that asking two questions about an assessment standard can reduce the need for re-assessment, this strategy should be used proportionately so as not to make the process too burdensome for both candidates and assessors.
- ◆ Centres are only required to submit evidence for one unit per candidate at each level. Only one unit is verified for each candidate at the external verification event.
- ◆ Where candidate evidence has been generated by field work, orally or via presentations, it is helpful for verification if assessors include any notes or prompts made by the candidate. A note of what the candidate said to overtake each assessment standard should be included so that verification can go ahead.
- ◆ It is helpful if assessors indicate where the candidate has overtaken an assessment standard across the entirety of the candidate's submission and not just at the first applicable comment. Candidates may overtake assessments standards in more than one place in their evidence and this should be credited wherever it occurs.
- ◆ It is helpful if assessors write on the candidate scripts. This could be ticks or comments as this helps the external verifiers understand the centre's judgements. Some candidate scripts were not annotated at all by the assessors.
- ◆ Where a candidate uses sources other than the ones provided in the assessment task it would be helpful to external verifiers if these sources could be noted on the candidate's script.

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Section 3: General comments

Most centres were 'accepted' for verification.

Amongst the small number of centres that were not accepted, a number had a centre-devised assessment which had not been prior verified. These centres were unclear as to which assessment items covered which assessment standard. Some assessment items did not relate to any of the assessment standards in the unit. The centres then gave candidates an incorrect pass or fail result. Prior verification is a free service provided by SQA and centres are encouraged to use this service for centre-devised assessments.

Many centres had clear internal verification policies to show how quality assurance ensures national standards had been applied. These were effective as they provided the centre with a clear and systematic process.

Quality assurance templates were devised by some centres to give a clear staged protocol for quality assurance.

The Verification Sample Form was completed appropriately by most centres. If evidence is interim evidence, centres should indicate if the candidate has an interim pass or interim fail. An interim pass is when candidates have passed all the assessment standards completed but still have other assessment standards to attempt.

Centres should ensure that the pass/fail result on the Verification Sample Form matches the results written by assessors on the candidate evidence.

Centres should only submit the evidence requested by SQA. In this round of verification, N3 and N4 were requested. Some centres, however, also submitted N5 evidence such as prelims to show why the candidate was at N4 level. Only unit evidence is externally verified.

Centres should always include evidence of internal verification processes along with the candidate evidence. This may be in documentation provided or in written comments on the candidate scripts.

Reasons for ‘not accepted’ outcomes were as follows:

- ◆ In an N4 Human Environments unit, a centre incorrectly accepted traditional farming methods as a change in farming.
- ◆ In an N4 Global Issues unit, a centre did not include any numerical or graphical information in the assessment for outcome 1 (AS1.1 and AS1.2).
- ◆ In an N4 Human Environments unit, a centre incorrectly passed candidates for AS2.2 when they had only provided answers for population change or population density rather than both and for AS2.3 when they had only provided answers for rural land use change or urban land use change rather than both.
- ◆ One centre failed a small number of candidates who had passed the unit assessment.